

the Official Journal of the CITY OF LONDON PHONOGRAPH & GRAMOPHONE
SOCIETY

No. 52.

DECEMBER, 1969.

President - Major H.H. Annand

Chairman - George L. Frow,

Treasurer - Gordon C. Bromly,

[REDACTED]
SEVENOAKS, Kent.[REDACTED]
WEST WICKHAM,,
Kent BR 4 OH B.

Vice-Chairman - Leonard Watts, [REDACTED]

TWICKENHAM,
Middsx.AN ANNOUNCEMENT

Our Honorary Secretary, Ernie Bayly, has told us at short notice that he has resigned his office and Editorship of THE HILLANDALE NEWS.

The reason is a policy postulated by Ernie Bayly involving the HILLANDALE NEWS, and which is not acceptable to Officers of the Society, and as no compromise can be met, we have, therefore, no alternative but to accept his resignation. We are ever-mindful of all he has done for the Society and are sorry that our parting should be in this manner.

In brief, the conditions he has put forward for continuing the Editorship would have meant the Society becoming subservient to its own magazine, and its destiny would rest too much in the hands of one person. The interests and well-being of the Society must come first; that has been and always will be our policy. It seems that Ernie Bayly is now publishing an independent magazine which perhaps he has had in mind for some time.

The HILLANDALE NEWS will continue to appear on alternate months but we are sorry that this issue has to be in reduced form. This is solely due to the short time we have been given for preparation and getting our organisation under way again. Whereas we cannot immediately emulate the scope and pictorial content of recent numbers, there is an immediate need of informative and well-written articles covering aspects of phonograph and gramophone interest, and we hope to be publishing photographs again in the next issue, and the Society will continue to flourish.

George Frow - Chairman

Gordon Bromly - Treasurer

Leonard Watts - Vice-Chairman

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The 51st Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on Thursday, 14th October, 1969 at the "White Swan", Tudor Street, E.C. 4. at 8 p.m.

In welcoming those present, the Chairman referred to the success of the Golden Jubilee Dinner in May, and thanked all who arranged it and those who attended. It was hoped that similar small informal functions of this nature could be held in the future.

The Chairman felt that it was time for a new face and fresh voice at the top table but to ensure that the Society settled into the "White Swan" smoothly he would be willing to stand for this year.

The Honorary Secretary, E. Bayly, then rose and presented the Minutes of the last A.G.M. which were taken as read and reported on membership and on the "HILLANDALE NEWS". Membership had levelled off at a figure of about 600 but this embraced a very wide field indeed and included national collections, libraries and universities.

The Honorary Treasurer presented his balance of accounts for the year; these were healthy but costs for the next year would necessitate certain economies and he asked for an increase in membership fee from 15/- to £1 and a curtailment of Membership Renewal Reminder Slips from 3 to 1; both proposals being approved.

The Honorary Auditor, Arthur Close, pronounced the accounts as correct and thanked the Honorary Treasurer for keeping the Society books so well.

The following Officers were elected -

| | | |
|---------------------|---|---------------|
| Chairman | - | George Frow |
| Honorary Secretary | - | Ernie Bayly |
| Honorary Treasurer | - | Gordon Bromly |
| Vice-Chairman | - | Len. L. Watts |
| Assistant Secretary | - | Peter Curry |
| Honorary Auditor | - | Arthur Close |

+ a Committee of 3 Members

The Chairman paid tribute to the retiring Vice-Chairman, Leslie Kaye for his patient work for so long at the "Horse and Groom" where he was the only person who really knew how to assemble the equipment and get it going in a hurry, and he had also to contend with a current change from D.C. to A.C. which did

not help matters. Leslie felt he wanted a change and the Society appreciated all he had done.

Arrangements were made for future programmes and a number of dates left open when it was hoped members from outside London would present a programme.

Members were again reminded of the new date and meeting place -
2nd FRIDAY OF EACH MONTH AT "WHITE SWAN", TUDOR STREET, LONDON,
E.C.4.

The Meeting was than closed.

Consolidated financial statement for the year Sept. 1st 1968 -
 Aug. 31st, 1969.

| <u>Receipts</u> | £ | s | d | <u>Expenditure</u> | £ | s | d |
|----------------------|-------|----|----|---------------------|-------|----|----|
| Bal. brought fwd at | | | | Postage | 201 | 19 | 8 |
| Sept 1/1968 | 115 | 17 | 2 | Printing | 263 | 13 | 9 |
| Subscriptions/ | | | | Stationery | 197 | 15 | 5 |
| Donations | 459 | 2 | 11 | Other general | | | |
| Catalogue reprints & | | | | Expenses | 37 | 16 | 4 |
| NEWS back issues | 211 | 3 | 10 | Society Dinner | 108 | 5 | 11 |
| For credit of Mid- | | | | Items purchased for | | | |
| land Group | 5 | 5 | - | re-sale | 160 | 10 | 6 |
| Miscellaneous | 28 | 8 | - | | | | |
| Society Dinner | 93 | 15 | - | | | | |
| Receipts from sales | | | | Balance in hand | | | |
| of items purchased* | 125 | - | 9 | Carried fwd | 68 | 11 | 1 |
| | £1038 | 12 | 8 | | £1038 | 12 | 8 |

*This figure does not denote a loss on items purchased; at the year-end there were considerable stocks in hand.

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Since the Annual General Meeting was held, we have received the resignation of the Honorary Secretary, Ernie Bayly, as stated elsewhere. We are glad to say that George Woolford has kindly agreed to become the Membership Secretary, and has been co-opted by the Officers; however for the present, any of the Officers named on the cover will be pleased to deal with Society matters.

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Material for future issues of HILLANDALE NEWS, both articles and advertisements should be sent to Len Watts, [REDACTED] TWICKENHAM, Middlesex. Reports of regional meetings and notices of future meetings should also be sent for inclusion. He has agreed for the present to handle Society products, re-prints, ties, binders etc., which will be listed in the next issue of THE HILLANDALE NEWS in February.

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The next Society Meeting in London will be at the "White Swan" at 6.45 p.m. on Friday December 12th, when George Walter will give a cylinder programme. For this Christmas Meeting, snacks will be available.

* * * * *

We understand from Mr. George Baker that E.M.I. will market an L.P. of a selection of his H.M.V. recordings in January. This will mark his 85th birthday the following month. Unfortunately at the moment there are no details of titles available.

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COLLECTING PATHÉ DISCS.

Some observations by Len Watts

Pathé Frères started their recording business in Paris in the 1890's with wax cylinders. They made several sizes of these, but they did manufacture cylinders which played on the standard phonographs. At the first they tried recording excerpts from operas and songs in alphabetical order, but this system was soon abandoned. Unfortunately the numbers were not abandoned but they were used again, and in some cases even a third time. How the record dealers sorted this out is anybody's guess!

Discs were introduced in 1906 in various diameters but with some startling differences from most other disc records. They were single-sided at first, like their contemporaries, but the most outstanding feature about them was that the playing groove began at the centre. Also the speed was rather high, the early ones hovering around 100 r.p.m., but later being standardised (or so the makers claimed) at 90 r.p.m. In actual practice they did not stick to this, though the vast majority of discs issued around 1912-1915 do play at this speed. There were some exceptions, for example a 35 cm disc in the writer's collection which features

Carrie Tubb, runs at about 80 r.p.m., presumably to get as much as possible of the item on the side. (It is Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer").

Another feature was the uniform price for the discs, no matter what recorded material they contained. Famous celebrities appeared on them such as Caruso, Boninsegna, Sammarco, etc. The most consistent size was the 28 cm, priced at first at 4/-, but later reduced to 3/- when the 35 cm disc was introduced about 1909 and priced at 4/-. Early on there was a 50 cm disc at 12/6d, and a 20 cm disc at 1/6d. Both these sizes were discontinued around 1909, and a 25 cm disc priced at 2/- was introduced, but this was soon brought down to 1/6d. There was also a 15 cm disc, but few of these are ever seen.

Original recordings were taken on very large wax cylinders, and transferred by some long-lost pantographic process on to the discs. Thus the same recording could be issued on different size discs to suit different size purses. In general though, the larger discs were of superior sound quality. This dubbing from outsize cylinders was continued until the introduction of electrical recording. Dubbings were taken from other makes of cylinders besides Pathe, mainly Sterling, but the writer has a suspicion that some may have been taken from Edison.

The stampers which are used for the discs are numbered and also have code-letters, which as yet, have not been deciphered. These numbers and letters are located below the word PATHE. In some instances where a recording was considered below standard, the work was re-recorded but given the same recording number (the number preceding the title), but the different takes can be detected by the different stamper numbers in some cases. There were, however, quite a number of new stampers made from the same cylinders, presumably where the stamper became worn, and always these stampers were given new numbers, so that it is possible to have the same recording issued on different stamper numbers.

Returning to the code-letters for a moment, it has been discovered that those marked 'MS' are Sterling recordings, but one in the writer's possession announcing itself as "Sterling Record" has 'R' as the code-letter. Collectors with a keen ear for detail will notice that Sterling recordings have a slightly distant sound with a suspicion of chamber echo, and there is a concertina-

like quality to some of the orchestral accompaniments. All these characteristics have transferred well to the Pathé discs, and can be easily detected. Those with the code-letters 'RE' are suspected of being Edison in origin, but the clues are somewhat slender. The writer has a disc of George Formby singing "John Willie come on", which he has also encountered on Edison cylinder, and no differences were apparent.

The label of these centre-start discs was stamped on the blank centre and filled with yellow water-paint. If Pathé discs are washed, the centre should be avoided, or the paint will come off. The general design was unaltered throughout the life of the centre-start disc (they were discontinued in about 1916) but detailed changes can give away the age of the disc, although not of the recording as many that were retained in the catalogues were re-mastered with newer-style lettering. The early discs carried a rather large recording number, and often the title only, no artist being given. As the years went by the recording number was gradually reduced in size, so that towards the end these numbers were considerably smaller than the title. Also more details were given over the years, so that by about 1912 full details of composer and artist appeared; also the general appearance of the lettering was much neater. A separate catalogue number, as distinct from the recording number was introduced about 1911 in a diamond immediately above the name PATHÉ. Alternative couplings were issued, but without altering the catalogue numbers! Thus it is not unusual to find a disc with a different catalogue number either side.

Unfortunately, as with convential disc records, when batches are unearched there are seldom any celebrity discs among them. It is always worth looking of course, but you can safely bet there will be some Scots Guards Band records there! Personally I find the orchestral discs marked merely with the title, followed by the letters 'P.F.' very rewarding and well worth investigation. They are polkas, marches, schottisches, marches, etc., mostly by obscure French composers, but are often delightfully tuneful.

Another big difference in PATHÉ discs of this type is that they are cut on the hill-and-dale system, and the grooves are rather broad. If you have not got the genuine sound-box and sapphires to play them, it will be found that reproduction is wonderful with a modern stereo pick-up cartridge, fitted of course, with a broad-tipped stylus.

After abandoning the centre-start discs, Pathé Frères issued their DIAMOND DISC, with a blue-etched label for about three years during the Great War: after the War paper-label edge-start discs appeared. Unfortunately they did not discriminate between the artists, and had partly-coloured labels, red, blue, buff, white, rising in price similarly to His Master's Voice. These edge-start discs, still dubbed from the original cylinders, are considered by most collectors to be of inferior sound quality to the earlier centre-start discs.

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THUMB-NAIL SKETCHES No. 44

by TYN PHOIL

EDISON Blue Amberol 1850, "Dream Faces" sung by Elizabeth Spencer
Song for soprano and chorus, words and music by W.M. Hutchinson

"The shadows lie across the dim old room,
"The firelight glows and fades into the gloom,
"While memory sails to Childhood's distant shore
"And dreams and dreams of days that are no more."

William Marshall Hutchinson, a British composer of considerable note, was born at Glasgow on 28th May, 1854. Many of his songs, "Dream Faces" most notably, became very popular in America, although Hutchinson himself was little-known outside the British Isles. He wrote both the words and the music of most of his songs, and the lyric of "Dream Faces" was his. His works include the cantatas "The Story of Elain" and "The Story of Naomi and Ruth", and comic operas "H.R.H." and "Glamour". Among his many songs may be named "Ehren on the Rhine", "Pierrot", "Mine Again", "Little Mandarin", and many part songs. In addition to these vocal items Hutchinson composed many pieces for the pianoforte.

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53 YEARS WITH THE SAME PHONOGRAPH

by SYDNEY H. CARTER

It doesn't seem anything like 53 years ago that, walking one day up Queens Road from the Clock Tower, Brighton, I suddenly espied in Nelson's Pram and Cycle Shop an attractive new Edison FIRE-SIDE Phonograph priced at 4 guineas complete, and I felt an irresistible urge to buy it.

Many years before I had possessed one of the 5/- PUCK Phonographs, but this was only a toy and gave me more annoyance than pleasure. Here was a well-built, quiet-running phonograph, playing 2 and

4 minute records, with a Model K turn-round reproducer, and it just had to be mine. I was earning at that time 25/- per week, so after giving Mother a pound for my board and keep, I was left with just 5/- for all my requirements. But buy it I did from my savings, and shortly afterwards my Uncle Fred gave me his nice collection of 60 Edison 4-minute Amberol cylinders. I married in 1920, and my wife and I have had many homes - but everywhere that Edison FIRESIDE Phonograph and records have gone with us. 53 years of use has not affected its running at all and it is still one of my treasured possessions.

When 2 LO - the first London broadcasting station - opened in 1922, I became keenly interested in electronics, and early in 1924 my wife and I opened a new business in Western Road, Brighton, for the supply of wireless components to amateur constructors. This was The Brighton Radio Stores. The business grew amazingly, and we had a showroom 60 feet long for sales counters and the display of components. One long side bench was devoted to the display of 30 or 40 loudspeakers of various types and prices, and in order to demonstrate these at ANY time, we installed a series of plugs so that comparison could be made between various models. I built a phonograph pick-up from a Model A Brown headphone coupled to a 2-stage amplifier, and playing the Amberol cylinders on the FIRESIDE with this pick-up gave excellent reproduction. It was operated from a small cabin under the stairs by one of the junior assistants, and was the means of selling many loudspeakers - often a more expensive model than the customer had intended!

My collection of Amberol cylinders has gradually expanded to hundreds, but over 50 years later, the chief thing is that I still derive the same pleasure from playing my FIRESIDE and ever thanking Thomas A. Edison for a truly wonderful invention. Incidentally I play solo and other items with a straight 48 inch W.B. wood-petal horn, and military band selections with a 36 inch Edison Bell brass horn, and one could not ask for better reproduction from wax cylinders.

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EDISON RECORDING GROUP PERSONNEL

A Selection by Gerry Annand

Apollo Quartet of Boston (1916)

William Whittaker, Lyman Hemenway, John Smallman,
Alexander Loman

Arkansas Trio (1924)

35

Vernon Dalhart, Ed. Smalle, John Cali (banjo)

Big Four Quartet (1900)

Byron G. Harlan, Joe Natus, Arthur Collins, A.D. Madeira

Cherniavsky Trio

Michael (violin), Leo (cello), Jan (piano)

Criterion Quartet (1905)

Robert R. Rainey, W.M.A. Washburn, Reinwald Werrenrath
(organiser)

Walter A. Downey

(1916) John Young, Horatio Reach, Geo. W. Reardon and
Donald Chalmers

Frank Croxton Quartet (1912)

Agnes Kimball (soprano)

Reed Miller (tenor)

Helda Van Der Veer (contralto)

Frank Croxton (bass-baritone)

Dann Trio (1921)

Blanche L. Dann (violin), M. Felicie Dann (cornet),
Rosalynd J. Davis (piano)

Edison Comic Opera Company (1910)

John Young, Steve Porter, Edith Chapman, Edna Stearns,
Cornelia Marvin.

Edison Male Quartet (1894)

Roger Harding, J.K. Reynard, S.H. Dudley, William F. Hooley

By 1896 Harding was succeeded by John Bieling and Reynard by
Jere Mahoney. In 1900 Mahoney was replaced by Harry MacDonough

Edison Mixed Quartet (1906)

Florence Hinkle, Mary Porter Mitchell, John Young,
Frederick Wheeler.

In 1909 Margaret Keyes took over from Mary Porter Mitchell

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PETS CORNER

Debtor (at London Bankruptcy Court)

"I am now working as a plumber and trying to keep
my head above water".

A new series of reissues of vocal recordings is announced this month (November 1969) by R.C.A. on VICTROLA, and entitled SOVEREIGN SERIES.

There are four discs in this first issue, though no doubt more will follow in due course. Two are recitals by single singers, the others being collections of arias by various singers.

John McCormack and Ernestine Schumann-Heink are the artists on VIC 1393 and VIC 1409 respectively. "A John McCormack Collection not previously issued on L.P.", as it is titled, includes many items highly regarded by collectors, such as the aria from "LA FIGLIA DEL REGGIMENTO", "O Sleep why dost thou leave me?" from "SEMELE", and Kramer's "Swans".

"The Art of Ernestine Schumann-Heinck" contains contralto arias from "LA CLEMENZA DI TITO", "RINALDO", "LUCREZIA BORGIA", "LA PROPHETE", and 6 other operas. The two miscellaneous recitals are entitled "Unforgettable Voices sing French Opera" (VIC 1394) and "Unforgettable Voices sing Italian Opera" (VIC 1395).

Obviously considerable thought has been given to the selection of items and singers for these two discs. They range in time from those who were making records in the earliest days such as Calve, Caruso, Destinn and De Luca, up to singers such as Dorothy Kirsten, Robert Merrill, Zinka Milanov and Ramon Vinay, who are either still making records or have been in recent years.

At a price of 24/- per record, these issues should have considerable success, and it will be very interesting to see what further issues materialise. I have no difficulty in believing that many collectors could suggest favourite artists and arias for inclusion in the series.

Turning now from this new series to one that has been going for some time, E.M.I.'s GOLDEN VOICE SERIES No. 17, devoted to songs and arias by that great international artist Jussi Bjorling, makes its appearance this month. The GOLDEN VOICE Records, a medium-price series, although it includes a number of very famous international artists such as Gigli, Tauber and Elisabeth Schumann, also includes important singers from the domestic catalogues, such as Walter Widdop, Isobel Baillie, and Heddle Nash. This series includes mostly electric recordings, although in the case of Gigli and Tauber, for instance, later-period acoustic recordings are included. The originals obviously were mono, and they are re-

issued as mono, not electronically produced imitation stereo. The issue devoted to Fritz Wunderlich (No. 12) is in true stereo, but of course these recordings were made in recent years.

The singers on these discs made their original recordings for various companies now in the E.M.I. group, for example Gervase Elwes - Columbia, Gigli - H.M.V., Tauber - Parlophone Odeon, and Heddle Nash both Columbia and H.M.V., but they are now all included in the same series. So far there does not appear to be any intention of delving back to the earliest years of gramophone history. In this respect it differs from the previous "Great Recordings of the Century" series. In one of those, COLH 119 - "The Young Caruso", all the titles except two were recorded in 1902.

From that time until now the major companies have made recordings of famous singers which we hope will continue to be available in various forms for the enjoyment of collectors.

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Extract from "THE STORY OF EDISON"

by Frank Mundell, published
1898

This narrative covers some of the recording experiences of Edison's agent in London, Col. Gouraud much of which took place at "Little Menlo", Upper Norwood in South London. For photographs of "Little Menlo" and Col. Gouraud, the reader is referred to HILLANDALE NEWS No. 44 of August 1968, which also carries a biographical article on Col. Gouraud.

In 1888 the "new phonograph", as it was called, was sent to England and exhibited at the Crystal Palace, London, by Colonel Gouraud, Edison's agent in this country. The Colonel had also received from his chief a phonogram, as a letter on a cylinder is called. He therefore invited a number of friends to his house "to meet Edison". When the company was assembled the phonogram was placed in the phonograph, and all present had the pleasure of hearing the inventor read his own letter. The manner in which the instrument reproduced its maker's voice was remarkable. It seemed as if the speaker was really in their midst. Anyone who had heard him speak would have at once recognised the tones of his voice as they fell from the phonograph.

Then the guests were treated to an address from the phonograph itself, which of course had been spoken into it, and in which the instrument was made to attribute its powers of speech to the "rare genius, incomparable patience, and indefatigable industry" of Edison. In his name it thanked the members of the London press for the favourable reception it had received. This was followed by a poem, composed by Dr. Nelson Powers, of Piermont on the Hudson, entitled "The Phonograph's Salutation". Breaking into verse, the instrument said:

"I am a tomb, a paradise, a shrine,
 "An angel, prophet, slave, immortal friend,
 "My living records, in their native tone,
 "Convict the knave and disputations end.
 "Hail! English shores, and homes and marts of peace
 "New trophies, Gouraud, yet are to be won,
 "May 'sweetness, light', and brotherhood increase,
 "I am the latest born of Edison."

This poetical effusion was followed by a varied and interesting programme of music, in which almost every instrument had a place. The cornet, the piano, the violin and the flute gave forth their sweet strains to the wonder and delight of the listeners. Then those present had the pleasure of "speaking back". On a fresh cylinder they were permitted to record the messages they wished to send the man who had invented the magical instrument before them.

Colonel Gouraud was, for some time after this, busily engaged in securing contributions from the most important persons on this side of the Atlantic. In these efforts he was very successful, for who could refuse to have their speech recorded, that the creator of the machine which made it possible, might in this way hold communion with the great ones of the earth, for was he not, and still is, one of the monarchs of the human race?

One day Edison held a levée at his house in America. His friends in the New World gathered in the flesh, to meet his admirers in the Old World, who had sent the record of their voices to speak for them. No better evidence of the importance of the instrument could have been given, than the interest it had aroused in the minds of so many famous persons. From Victoria, Queen and Empress, down to the poet of the Shah of Persia, all ranks and professions were presented. But the Shah himself could not be induced to address himself to a wax roller.

Queen Victoria sent a kind and encouraging letter to the inventor. The King of Greece expressed his regret that the phonograph was not in existence in the days of Homer. The King, Queen and Crown Prince of Italy spoke.

"I am delighted with this instrument," said the Princess of Wales. "Yes, most wonderful, most marvellous," the Prince struck in.

"I can add nothing to that which their Royal Highnesses have just spoken," said Lord Salisbury.

Henry Irving and other actors spoke in approving terms, and said "a piece" into the instrument. Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft both contributed a recitation. Greetings were also sent from Lord Armstrong, Lord Rayleigh, Lord Kelvin, Sir Morell Mackenzie, the Earl of Aberdeen, and many other distinguished men. Tennyson and Browning's voices seemed to rise from their graves. Since they had spoken the words, they had been laid side by side in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. Tennyson began by explaining that he could never remember a line of his poems. He begged therefore, that he might read something. So he read his "Ode to Wellington". Browning started out bravely to recite his own poem, "How they brought the news from Ghent to Aix", but his memory failed him once or twice. The "hums" and "haws", and the "Oh, I can't remember!" thus provoked from Browning, were faithfully dealt with by the phonograph. Cardinal Manning's voice was also heard, though he too had passed into the silent grave since the words to which they were listening had been spoken.

'Send me Mr. Gladstone's voice" wrote Edison to Col. Gouraud. And in response to that request the silvery voice of the grand old man eloquent had been sent. Those of us who have sat or stood spellbound in closely-packed rooms, suffering discomforts to which we had become unconscious while the silvery tones of the greatest orator of the day fell on our enraptured ears, can form some idea of the keen enjoyment and gratification Edison's guests must have experienced, as they listened to the voice of the man of whom they had heard so much.

The guests of the evening had the pleasure of listening to Handel's "Israel in Egypt", as it had been rendered by four

thousand voices with the accompaniment of the huge organ and orchestra, at the Handel Festival of 1888 at the Crystal Palace.

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and GRAMOPHONE SOCIETY, to whom articles and advertisements
should be addressed.